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### **Advancement in Emergency Preparedness and Response** *Achievements by Congress and the Administration*

#### **Increased Funding for First Responders**

Since September 11, 2001 \$23.1 billion has been awarded to enhance the ability of state and local governments and first responders to prevent, prepare for, and respond to acts of terrorism and other emergencies.

#### **The Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act**

The Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders Act (H.R. 3266) will help cut the red tape in the current first responder grant process – making the system smarter so that first responders most at risk get help faster. H.R. 3266 will help first responders and taxpayers get more from every Homeland Security dollar by:

- prioritizing assistance to first responders serving where the risk is greatest
- emphasizing an advance planning process to reduce administrative bottlenecks.
- determining the essential capabilities communities need to prepare for terrorism
- encouraging regional cooperation and mutual aid agreements through regional applications

H.R. 3266 passed the Homeland Security Committee unanimously in March 2004 and is expected on the House floor this June.

#### **Developing National Preparedness Goals**

Through Homeland Security Presidential Directive-8 (HSPD-8), the President tasked Secretary Ridge, in coordination with other federal departments and State and local jurisdictions, to develop national preparedness goals, improve delivery of federal preparedness assistance to State and local jurisdictions, and strengthen the preparedness capabilities of Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local governments.

## **Interoperability of Communication Equipment**

For our First Responders, the capacity to communicate with each other, on the scene of a major event, is crucial.

- Project SAFECOM is a DHS initiative to develop technological solutions to enable legacy emergency communications systems to be fully interoperable at the federal, state, and local levels.
- Several Federal grant programs also were funded in FY2003/2004 with specific guidance to improve interoperability. These programs include: State Homeland Security Grant Program, High Threat Urban Area Grant Program, COPS, and the FEMA Interoperable Communications Grants.

## **Creating Standards for First Responder Equipment**

The DHS' Science and Technology division has adopted its first standards regarding personal protective equipment developed to protect first responders against chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents. These standards, which will assist state and local procurement officials and manufacturers, are intended to provide emergency personnel with the best available protective gear.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology division also has adopted its first radiological and nuclear detectors standards.

## **Revising the National Response Plan**

Through Homeland Security Presidential Directive-5 (HSPD-5), President Bush and Secretary Ridge revised the National Response Plan, integrating the current family of Federal domestic prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery plans into one single all-hazards plan, with clear lines of authority and responsibility. A coordinated response is key to confronting the complex threats that we face.

## **Devising a Homeland Security Strategy**

In 2004, each state was required to submit a State Homeland Strategy in order to receive Homeland Security grant funds. To develop this strategy, states and local jurisdictions updated their needs assessment data to reflect post-September 11, 2001 realities. Based on these needs, they identified priorities for homeland security grant money. The strategy will assist DHS's Office of Domestic Preparedness, as well as states and local jurisdictions, in better allocating and spending federal resources for homeland security.

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